

Comments on MB Docket 02-277 - Media Ownership

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners Abernathy, Copps, Martin and Adelstein -

As a media consultant for both business and technical issues, with 22 years in the Television business, I would like to make two points on the upcoming notice of proposed rulemaking for the ownership cap for media businesses:

1. Please stop the madness - do not vote in favor of increasing the number of stations, newspapers or outlets that a single media company may own.

In fact, the commission should rescind its earlier decisions based on the negative effect these decisions have wrought on the quality of television news editorial diversity and lack of community involvement and responsiveness in radio programming (Clear Channel Communications).

The facts show that financial independence amongst news organizations, station groups, newspapers, radio stations and other outlets is the only way to ensure that the fourth estate can do its job effectively and keep the government in check and in line with the will of the electorate.

In the case of this rulemaking, it is elementary to see a direct conflict of interest between the gov't's role of regulating this industry and the ability for gov't to act capriciously and with fiat without fear of having to justify its actions. If gov't's actions can be kept in the dark (as have the comments on this action) much mischief can be done without citizen reaction until its too late to reverse its decisions. And, even if the decisions are ultimately rescinded through litigation, many of the media companies will have already acted, at which time the transactions could have been "grandfathered" by the ruling and the reversal be a hollow victory.

2. The FCC appears to confirm by this action to be just another tool of the increasingly autocratic republican regime in Washington - in concert with big business. Since the 2000 election, the gov't has become more secretive, self serving and is attempting to concentrate its power. The behavior of the FCC during this decision-making process appears to be following this lead.

This secretive policy has been evidenced by:

- *- FOI rules being severely restricted;
- *- Policy on declassifying previously classified documents has been delayed, sometimes for years;
- *- The VP's energy executive committee and the GAO's frustrated attempt to obtain information about it;
- *- The gov't currently classified report on 9-11; and
- *- The Commission's unwillingness to open these discussions to multiple, well publicized public comment sessions.

These are all manifestations of a very disturbing trend within gov't.

While it is understandable that all media outlets beside C-SPAN have been absolutely mum about this, the secrecy within the Commission surrounding the current rulemaking is shocking and patently un-democratic, even to some of its members.

As Commisioner Adelstein put it: "Most people in this country have no idea what's about to happen to them even though their very democracy is at stake."

Do not, therefore, subject yourself to being a puppet of Big Govt and Big Media. Open this discussion and decision to public comment before the only voice left is the "Ministry of Truth"!

Delay the June vote until adequate public comment has been heard.

Respectfully,

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